

CLAIMS

1. A menu generation system for use by ordinary computer users that enables the user to readily construct and modify menus and submenus to execute user-prepared commands, the system comprising:

a program operable by an ordinary computer user to construct a viewable main menu with a plurality of user-defined choices thereon, and if desired at least a first viewable submenu which may be accessed by the user through a choice made on the main menu, the program including

a first component operable by an ordinary computer user to construct the viewable main menu, with the component automatically providing at least first, second and third user-selectable choices on the main menu, the first and second choices being automatically provided by the system, the first choice being for creating a new menu item on the main menu, the second choice being for creating a new submenu, and the third choice being to quit the current menu;

a second component operable by an ordinary computer user to modify the content of the main menu and the content of any submenus as a menu item;

a third component operable by an ordinary computer user to create a submenu, the third component including a viewable indicator selectable by the user for menu item; and

a fourth component operable by an ordinary computer user to create and modify a plurality of storage locations used by the menu generation system for storing operating commands used by the menu generation system for launching other executable programs accessible to the computer user, and for storing data that is referenced as part of creating and displaying user-viewable menus.

2. A menu generation system as in Claim 1, wherein the fourth component is operable to access at least a plurality of files normally stored in the storage locations, the files including at least one command map file and at least one menu configuration file, and wherein

the command map file is arranged to store a plurality of operating commands and a set of aliases used as an shortcut technique for referencing certain ones of the operating commands; and

the menu configuration file is arranged to store data that is referenced as part of the process of creating and displaying a menu.

3. A menu generation system as in Claim 1, further comprising:

a fifth component operable to allow a user to create at least a plurality of individual menu items associated with respective user-selected programs to be launched, with each such menu item being operable at runtime to perform a launch of its respective program by selection of the menu item.

4. A menu generation system as in Claim 3, wherein the fifth component is further arranged to enable the user to specify, in conjunction with a menu item and the program to be launched that is associated therewith, at least one file that is to be automatically opened when the program to be launched is executed upon selection of the menu item.

5. A menu generation system as in Claim 1, wherein operating commands associated with menu items are stored in a dynamic array.

6. A menu generation system as in Claim 1, further comprising:

a fifth component operable to allow a user to create at least a plurality of individual menu items to be selected by an ordinary user which launch an Internet browser, and enable the user to selectively specify if desired a web page to be opened in connection with a particular menu item upon the launch of the Web page.

7. A menu generation system as in Claim 6 wherein the fifth component is arranged to allow an ordinary user to specify hyperlinks in connection with user-selected menu items, whereby the menu items are operable, upon be chosen, to retrieve a specified web page, a specified document, a specified document portion or the like through the use an Internet browser program as the operating command in conjunction with such menu items..

8. A menu generation system as in Claim 1, further comprising:

a fifth component operable to permit a user to prepare directories to be merged, the fifth component including means for copying menu files which have identical names.

9. A menu generation system as in Claim 8, wherein the fifth component is operable to merge directories recursively.

10. A menu generation system as in Claim 9, further comprising:

a sixth component operable for tracking creations of files in a plurality of local activity summary files and in a global activity summary file.

11. A menu generation system as in Claim 10, wherein the fifth component is

operable to merge the local activity summary files if their parent directories are merged.

12. A menu generation system as in Claim 1, wherein the program is operable to flattens a directory tree structure by using menus and submenus to represent relationships among directories and their subdirectories.

13. A menu generation system as in Claim 1, further comprising:
a fifth component operable to search strings from a source file by storing the searched strings in a hash array with each string as a key.

14. A menu generation system as in Claim 13, wherein the fifth component is operable to create a line object for each searched string, and wherein such line objects each have the searched string as its content.

15. A menu generation system as in Claim 14, wherein the fifth component is operable so that the line objects if desired can be used a head item of a linked list.

16. A menu generation system as in Claim 15, wherein the fifth component is operable so that for each searched string and a line in the source file that contains the string, the fifth component is operable to create a new line object, and wherein such a line object has the line as its content.

17. A menu generation system as in Claim 16, wherein the fifth component is operable to append a newly created line object to an associated linked list.

18. A method for generating computer viewable menus, usable by ordinary computer users, that enables a user to readily construct and modify menus and submenus to execute user-prepared commands, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a program operable by an ordinary computer user to construct a viewable main menu with a plurality of user-defined choices thereon, and if desired at least a first viewable submenu which may be accessed by the user through a choice made on the main menu;

(b) constructing a first viewable main menu, and automatically providing as a part thereof at least first, second and third user-selectable choices on the main menu, the first choice being for creating a new menu item on the main menu, the second choice being for creating a new submenu, and the third choice being to quit the current menu;

(c) modifying the content of the main menu via user selection of the first choice on the main menu;

(d) creating a submenu via user selection of the second choice on the main menu;

(e) creating, via user input, a viewable indicator selectable by the user for a menu item in the main menu;

(f) storing data that is referenced as part of creating and displaying user-viewable menus; and

(g) launching at least one executable program, via a user selection of a menu item on the main menu, the launching step including the substep of referencing data stored as part of the user's creation of the selected menu item.

19. The method for generating computer viewable menus, as in Claim 18, further comprising:

(h) as part of carrying out at least one of the foregoing steps (a) through (g), accessing computer files including at least one command map file and at least one menu configuration file, and wherein

the command map file is arranged to store a plurality of operating commands and a set of aliases used as an shortcut technique for referencing certain ones of the operating commands; and

the menu configuration file is arranged to store data that is referenced as part of the process of creating and displaying a menu.

20. A computer program product, to be used in conjunction with a user-driven menu generation system for creating and modifying user-selectable menus and submenus with each menu being operable to have one or more user-selectable menu choices, on a computer system including at least one computer having at least one processing circuit, the software product comprising:

a storage medium readable by at least the one processing circuit and storing instructions for execution for by the processing circuit for performing a method comprising the steps of –

(a) providing a program operable by an ordinary computer user to construct a viewable main menu with a plurality of user-defined choices thereon, and if desired at least a first viewable submenu which may be accessed by the user through a choice made on the main menu;

(b) constructing a first viewable main menu, and automatically providing as a part thereof at least first, second and third user-selectable choices on the main menu, the first choice being for creating a new menu item on the main menu, the second choice being for

creating a new submenu, and the third choice being to quit the current menu;

(c) modifying the content of the main menu via user selection of the first choice on the main menu;

(d) creating a submenu via user selection of the second choice on the main menu;

(e) creating, via user input, a viewable indicator selectable by the user for a menu item in the main menu;

(f) storing data that is referenced as part of creating and displaying user-viewable menus; and

(g) launching at least one executable program, via a user selection of a menu item on the main menu, the launching step including the substep of referencing data stored as part of the user's creation of the selected menu item.